



Congressional Update...

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Summary of Ethics Legislation in the 110th Congress

Honest Leadership Package (H. Res. 6). As its first act, the House passed an extensive ethics rules overhaul. The new rules package banned gifts and meals from lobbyists, as well as tightened restrictions on travel paid for by outside groups. The new rules also reform the earmark process, by formally defining an earmark, requiring members to certify that neither they nor their spouses will benefit from an earmark, and most importantly, making the written requests of members for earmarks public. *Passed with a bipartisan vote of 430-1.*

Pension Forfeiture Act (H.R. 476). This legislation would strip the congressional pensions of members convicted of felonies related to their official duties. *Passed with a bipartisan vote of 431-0.*

Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007 (H.R. 2316). This bill clamps down on the "revolving door" by requiring members and staff to recuse themselves from pertinent legislation when negotiating future employment, more thorough and frequent disclosure of lobbying activities in an online, searchable database, disclosure of campaign contributions "bundled" by lobbyists (collecting multiple campaign checks for a member of Congress), and increases the penalties for bad actors. Additionally, the bill requires registered lobbyists to disclose when they request earmarks from members of Congress and their staffs. *Passed with a bipartisan vote of 396-22.*

Freedom of Information Act Amendments (H.R. 1309). This bill strengthens the Freedom of Information Act to better protect the public's right to know and make the government more transparent. *Passed by a bipartisan vote of 308-117.*

House Ethics Commission Establishment Act (H.R. 1754). I am cosponsoring legislation that will establish an independent House Ethics Commission within the legislative branch. Our current ethics enforcement is nothing more than the fox guarding the henhouse. This bill will permit an independent entity to monitor potential ethics violations of members of Congress. *Pending legislation.*